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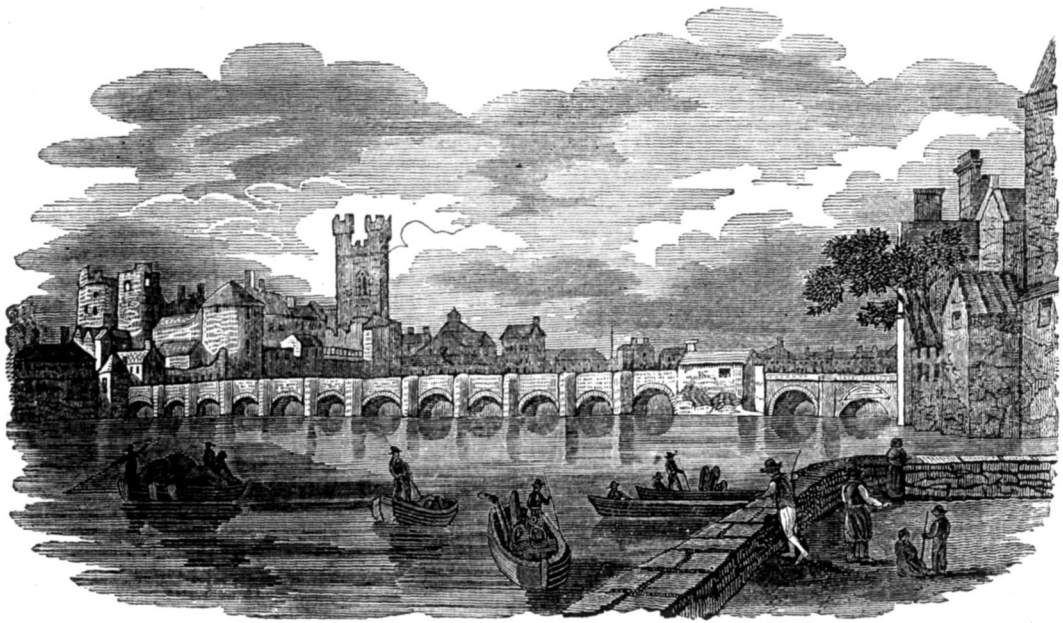
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architecture, so long known in Europe by the appellation of "Gothic," a term, however, which the architectural antiquaries of the present age, seem generally disposed to reject: towards the conclusion of the succeeding century it arrived at its highest state of perfection.

The origin of this style has occupied the attention, and divided the opinions, of most of the learned and able antiquaries of England and elsewhere, and still remains involved in uncertainty and conjecture. It would be foreign to our purpose, to enter into a minute investigation of the various theories which have been promulgated on this subject; but we may observe, that we cordially concur in opinion with those authors—and they are far the greater and more judicious number—who derive the pointed arch, the characteristic feature of the style, from the East, and suppose it to have been introduced immediately after the Crusades.—To us, indeed, it appears that nothing but the most mistaken national zeal could have induced learned and ingenious men to employ their talents, and hazard their reputation, in the vain endeavour to win for Britain the honour of inventing the style, on such feeble grounds as those which they have stated—namely, the supposed origin of the pointed arch, as having arisen from the intersection of two semicircular ones, of which an instance has been discovered in a church of the eleventh century. A little reflection would, we think, at once suggest, that the arch formed by a slight deviation from the inclined sides that by their concurrence from the apex of a triangle, would be the earliest and most obvious attempt of its kind; and that it was so, the observations of the most intelligent travellers have proved incontestably. "The advocates of the early origin of the 'pointed style' in Gothic architecture," says the learned Dr. Edward Clarke, "will have cause enough for triumph in the Cyclopean Gallery, at Tiryas, exhibiting 'lancet arches' almost as ancient as the time of Abraham." And he afterwards observes, that "it is evident that the acute or lancet arch is, in fact, the *oldest* form of arch known in the world, and that examples of it may be referred to in buildings erected before the war of Troy." "Lancet arches" are to be found also in the Cyclopean buildings of Ireland, as well as in many of the early churches and round towers, in which that style was still preserved. We have no

intention, however, of claiming the invention of the pointed style for Ireland, for it is not (as certain Bœtian builders of modern churches seem to imagine,) the mere presence of pointed arches in an edifice that constitutes what is properly called a Gothic building, but the harmonious adaption of all the parts of the structure to that, its leading feature. And, if we consider that such an arrangement must intuitively, and of necessity, have occurred to the *skilful* architect, who, in constructing an edifice, should adopt the pointed arch, as the distinguishing characteristic of its style, we shall, perhaps, be at no loss to account for the origin of "Gothic Architecture;" or for the apparently extraordinary circumstance of "Gothic" churches having appeared simultaneously in almost every part of Europe. We are borne out, we think, in this conclusion, by a reference to the pointed architecture of England, France, Germany, Italy, and Spain. We see, indeed, the architects of each country travelling at one and the same time towards the same goal, but yet by very different routes. Each endeavoured, by successive efforts, to get rid of unharmonious incongruities; and though they might, and we are sure they did, borrow occasionally from each other the graces which individual fine taste suggested, they still preserved in their general details, such individual characteristics as make the ecclesiastical architecture of each nation peculiar, and distinct from that of every other. If these observations be well founded, it is vain and useless any longer to enquire what country invented the pointed style of architecture. It was the natural result of the adoption of the pointed arch in ecclesiastical architecture, at a period when the principles of taste began to be generally understood and acted upon. "When men enquire," says Horace Walpole, "who invented Gothic buildings they might as well ask, who invented bad Latin? The former was a corruption of the Roman architecture, as the latter was of the Roman language. Both were debased in barbarous ages, both were refined as the age polished itself; but neither were restored to the original standard. Beautiful Gothic architecture was engrafted on Saxon deformity; and pure Italian succeeded to vitiated Latin." But we wander, perhaps, from our subject, though we hope and believe our readers will pardon the digression.



Thomond Bridge, Limerick.

THOMOND BRIDGE, LIMERICK.

Among the various interesting objects which the scenery of the Shannon presents to the lover of the picturesque and antiquarian, the several bridges thrown across its mighty stream, to connect the opposite provinces, are

not the least conspicuous or imposing. The former will look with pleasure at the picturesque variety and irregularity of form observable in their rude arches, and their long and low horizontal length of outline will remind him forcibly of one of the most frequent incidents in the classic compositions of the great Italian landscape painter,

Claude Lorraine. The latter will view them with no less interest as being generally the most ancient and important remains of their kind now existing in Ireland.

The origin of stone bridges in Ireland is not very accurately ascertained; but this much at least appears certain, that none of any importance were erected, previous to the 12th century. In that age our annals record the erection of two bridges over the Shannon and one over the Suck, by the Monarch Turlough O'Connor. There is reason however to conclude that those bridges were of wood, and that the first structures of the kind, of stone, were erected by, or after the arrival of, the Anglo-Normans.

Of these, the subject of our prefixed illustration ranks as one of the most ancient, having been erected by the English adventurers as a necessary step to their intended subjugation of the ancient province of Thomond; and when we observe the rudeness and apparent unskilfulness of its construction, and consider how comparatively short-lived many of the noblest structures of the kind have been, we may well wonder at its power in resisting for so many ages the destroying hand of time, and the giant force of such a great and rapid river.

Thomond bridge has the merit of being perfectly level. It crosses the main arm of the Shannon from the N. E. extremity of the English town, and is built on fourteen arches, under each of which some marks of the hurdles on which it was erected are said to be still visible. According to tradition, the original expense of this venerable structure was but *thirty pounds*.

Connected with the locality of Thomond bridge, there are many historical recollections of a deep and saddening interest; but the presiding spirit of our little journal bids us beware of bringing them into notice,—and we gladly obey the mandate. To see our countrymen of all classes and denominations, “united in the bond of peace,” is our first wish—our most ardent aspiration, and the page of history that would mar this consummation, by exciting one painful recollection, or one ungenerous exultation, we desire,—as it should be the desire of all good men,—to leave buried in silent oblivion. In lieu of such, let the reader take the following beautiful sonnet to the Shannon; the composition of a gentleman of rank, and what is better, of patriotism and talent, who resides upon the bank of the noble river he apostrophises. P.

THE SHANNON.

River of billows! to whose mighty heart
The tide-wave rushes of the Atlantic sea—
River of quiet depths! by cultured lea,
Romantic wood, or city's crowded mart—
River of old poetic founts! that start
From their lone mountain-cradles, wild and free
Nursed with the fawns, lulled by the wood larks glee,
And cushat's hymeneal song apart—
River of chieftains! whose baronial halls,
Like veteran warders, watch each wave-worn steep,
Portumna's towers, Bunnatty's regal walls,
Carrick's stern rock, the Geraldine's grey keep—
River of dark mementos!—must I close
My lips with Limerick's wrongs—with Aughrim's woes?
A de V—.

A TOUR TO CONNAUGHT.

LETTER III.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE DUBLIN PENNY JOURNAL.

SIR—I ought to make some excuse, sufficient to satisfy your readers, for commencing a tour to Connaught, and in the course of five weeks getting no farther than the hill of Cappagh. It is but a poor plea to urge that your *undertaker*, Terence O'Toole, has something else to do than indite tours. You can console yourself with this reflection, which I suggest for my own benefit as well as yours—namely, that during the intervals of my performance, you have been able to supply your readers with *material* far better than I could furnish.

But to the point. In my last letter I abruptly broke off descending from Cappagh hill towards the Boyne. After having taken a very proper and ample breakfast at a

new *inn* (I beg mine host's pardon—*hotel*) that has been established on the spot where the old Nineteen-mile-house inn formerly hung out its sign, we proceeded about a mile, and passing the Canal bridge, observed a fine building erected by the Royal Canal Company as a hotel, but now untenanted, and apparently going to ruin. “How comes it,” said the Englishman, “that your Irish canals are such bad speculations? They are on a larger scale than almost any we have in England, and yet they seem to have little trade, and to be of scarcely any use in promoting the commerce of the country.” “Why, Sir,” said I, “if I might venture to give an opinion on such a subject, I would say that we *began at the end*. Trade and commerce should be found flourishing to a certain extent in a country before canals are ventured. It seems to me a false speculation to undertake to join this river with that seaport, as, for instance, the Shannon with the city of Dublin, until it is ascertained that there are manufacturing towns, and collieries, and potteries, and a large amount of commercial capital and industry in the country to which a canal might give convenient transit and circulation. Canals may *convey*, but can never *create*. In this way the Caledonian canal, one of the greatest undertakings of modern times, failed. To be sure it was a noble thought to join sea to sea, and use the great glen of Scotland as a ship canal, whereby the immense circuit of the western coast could be avoided. But it has not answered. There is no trade or transit between Inverness and the western coast of Scotland. I remember John Fitzgibbon, the famous Chancellor of Ireland, prophesying against these canals, that in process of time they would be left empty, and would then afford to the citizens of Dublin a sheltered ride where now the deepest waters roll. But, after all, he will prove I trust, a false prophet. The trade is increasing, though slowly, and I trust the passage boats, instead of creeping at their provokingly slow pace, will adopt the plan that has succeeded in Scotland, on the Forth and Ardrossan canals, where boats of a light construction go at the rate of twelve miles an hour—and what is extraordinary, the surge caused by this rapidity is not found to be so injurious to the banks as the slow motion of a heavy boat.”

We now arrived at the Boyne—and true it is that when you get to that river, it is about as ugly a stream, if stream it can be called that appears to have no current, as need be looked at. You approach it by what reminds you of desolation—a mansion house ruined in the rebellion of 1798—a place that recalls all the bitter recollections of that period of “domestic fury and fell civil strife.” Yes, look at the potatoe garden on the side of the road opposite the wasted mansion house—observe that little mound fenced in with gooseberry bushes—there lie in one large grave the remains of hundreds who fell in the attack upon the dwelling house of the Tyrrells—God keep such evil days and bloody deeds from ever recurring again! The Boyne flows lazily here amidst sedge and reeds—appearing but the dark drain of an immense morass—the discharge of the waste waters of the Bog of Allen. A strong position in time of war—Lord Wellington knows it well, he has often thrown his soldier eye upon it—his paternal mansion, Dangan, is not far off to the right, near Trim. How different was the young fun-loving, comic, quizzing, gallanting Captain Arthur Wellesley, when residing in his shooting lodge between Summerhill and Dangan, from the stern, cautious, careworn Fabius of the Peninsular war; the trifling, provoking, capricious sprig of nobility, dreaded by the women, hated by the men—the dry joker, the practical wit, the ne'er-do-well—despaired of, as if good for nothing, by his own family, from the redoubtable hero of Waterloo—the great prime minister of England—he who achieved a greater moral victory than that of Mont St. Jean, when neutralizing or overcoming political and religious animosities, he set a question at rest that had vexed the world for nearly three centuries. As this is treading on your forbidden ground of politics, I suppose you will use your scissars here, good sir, and cut out the peccant part. By-the-bye, Dangan itself is altered as much as Arthur Wellesley—the one as much for the worse as the other for the better. It was, I remember, a noble mansion, surrounded by walls belted in with trees, and altogether befitting a nobleman's residence—but, alas, it passed from the hands